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Nation Building and International Solidarity

Some Considerations about Balkans in Italian Republican Thinking in 19th Century

In this paper I want to review the thinking of some Italian republicans' ideologists and patriots for what concerns the matter of National orders of Southern Slavs, with more attention to the Western Balkans. I argue that the Republicans had a particular conception of the National issues, different from the concepts of Nation and Nationality as intended by the Socialists, the Liberals and the Monarchists. Also I would like to underline a particular sensibility on the matter of the Nationality in Balkans by that Italian patriots subjected to the Austrian crown.

Of course I will deal with the ideas of Giuseppe Mazzini, that has already been well studied by the Italian, Slav and International historiography, but also the ideas of Tommaseo, Italian from Dalmatia, republican but not on the same positions of Mazzini, of Attilio and Emilio Bandiera, Venetian patriots near to Mazzini's thinking, but independent in actions and political practice. I will also give some elements about the vision of the International order of liberals, monarchists and, overall, not Austrian's subjected.

The study of those topics appears very current in this period of crisis of the state-nation concept and seems useful to reconsider concepts such as unity, integration and solidarity of Europe and between Nations.

Key words:

Nation building, Republicanism, Ideologies, Europe, Politics

Patriots and ideologists from Italy gave an important contribution to the elaboration of the concepts of Nation, Homeland and Nationality in the 19th Century. Those patriots were affiliated to the Republican movement and their considerations concerned not only their country, but also many other European countries.

Their attention – obviously – was focused mainly on those countries that in the 19th century were not independent. Those thinkers dealt with the issue of national assets of the Southern Slavs, in particular the inhabitants of the Western Balkans. Their interest in those matters was due to similar situations in the Italian territories – for example in the north east that, from 1815 to 1866, was subjected to the Austrian crown.

I want to underline a particular consideration of national issues in the Italian Republican thinkers – different from the concepts of Nation and Nationality as intended by the Socialists, Liberals, Monarchists in the same and in the subsequent period. They affirmed a nationalistic position but able, at the same time, to coexist, to not deny, the aspirations of other European peoples. Also, I would like to point out a particular sensitivity with regard to Balkan national issues by those Italian patriots subjected of the Austrian Empire.

Therefore, I will address not only the thought of Giuseppe Mazzini (1805–1872), already extensively studied in international historiography. I deal with the ideas of Nicolò Tommaseo (1802–1874), Italian-Dalmatian, republican with positions less advanced then Mazzini, and I review the considerations of the brothers Attilio and Emilio Bandiera (1810–1844; 1819–1844), Venetian patriots close to Mazzini ideas, but autonomous in their actions and initiatives.

I want to point the different vision of the international order of Liberals, Monarchists and especially of those thinkers and activists not subjected to the Habsburg crown.

The study of these issues is also of great relevance today – a period in which we assist to the crisis of the State-nations – and it could also be a boost to reconsider the concepts of European – or, however, transnational – Unity, Integration and Solidarity.

The political thought of Mazzini regarded the possibility of cooperation and brotherhood between the peoples of Southern Slavs. The ideas of the Italian patriot (born in Genoa) have been the most studied. The reason, probably, is to be found not only in the originality of his thought, but also in the attempts that the Genoese patriot did to implement his ideas, mainly through the contacts with patriots and thinkers from Serbia and Croatia.

«La poesia nazionale è l'alito del popolo, lo specchio in cui si riflette, più che altrove, il pensiero, l'idea che quel popolo è chiamato a svolgere e rappresentare nella storia dell'Umanità [The national poetry is the breathe of a people, the mirror in which is reflected, more then elsewhere, the thought, the idea that people is called to achieve and represent in the History of Humanity]» (Mazzini 1832, 224). In the 1830s the young Mazzini studied the ethnical origins, the language and the literature, the culture and the political situation of the so called "European Turkey". He considered the Principality of Serbia the most advanced country for its culture and for its development of civil rights. He argued that «la novella Europa tende[sse] a costituirsi per masse e non per frazioni [the new Europe should has been built by agglomeration and not by fractions]» (Mazzini 1834, 149). For what

concerned the national issue of Southern Slavs he figured out a federation inside a more extended Hungarian state. This was in 1833. In the subsequent year the Italian republican activists failed leading an expedition in Savoia (repressed by Piedmont army). This event drove the *Giovane Italia* organization [Young Italy] into a crisis and pushed Mazzini to deepen his knowledge about southern Europe and to fund the Giovane Europa organization [Young Europe] in 1834. The foundation of this new movement was aimed to spread the ideas and the apostolate of the Genoese patriot among the population of the Slavic South. He was day by day more convinced that the resolution of the Italian national issue were linked necessarily to a general re-ordering of European assets (Mastellone 1994, 185–189).

In the years 1830s and 1840s, the real problem for Mazzini was connecting the different cells of the republican movement. During the subsequent decades, after being in contact with various activists and thinkers of the Balkan area who – mainly in the 1870s – led republican and democratic organizations as the *Ujedinjena omladina srpska* (an equivalent of the *Giovane Italia* for Serbia) Mazzini convinced himself that an administrative federation of Serbs, Croatians, Montenegrins, Macedonians, Bulgarians was possible. He based this argumentation once again on linguistic and literature foundations. So, Mazzini deeply argued that the Southern Slavic people aspirations were similar. He had this optimistic vision of the relationship between nationalities during his whole life, trying at the same time to convert this hope in concrete actions. For Mazzini freedom and independence were to achieve through brotherhood and collaboration between nationalities, through a common action that allows the peoples involved to overtake their particular issues. «Quando saranno dunque convinte le nazioni che la salute di tutte sta in una franca e fratellevole alleanza tra di esse e che l'una è la solidaria dell'altra? [When the nations will convince themselves that everyone's safety consists in an honest and fraternal alliance?] (Mazzini 1849, 53]

The real situation of the emancipation movements of southern Slavs was more complicated that the one supposed by Mazzini. There was the Illyrian movement of Ljudevit Gaj (1809–1872). In Belgrade the *Načertanije*, the "Program for Serbia's foreign and national policy", written in 1844 by Ilija Garašanin (1812–1874) envisioned an independent Serbian state. The document is still matter of discussion by the scholars, divided in who argues that Garašanin was an inclusive Yugoslavist, and who maintains that he was an exclusive Serbian nationalist seeking a Greater Serbia (Batakovic 1994; Manetovic 2008). In this second interpretation the *Načertanije* results partially in opposition to the Gaj's movement. The Illyrian movement was itself a kind of "protojugoslavismo" [proto Yugoslav movement] (Guida 2003, 25; D'Alessandri 2010, 6), but asserted a clear message of collaboration and federation between the southern Slavs.

The influence of Mazzini's ideas among the Balkan thinkers, increased from the 1860s. For example Mazzini had a big influence on Vladimir Jovanović's (1833–1922) ideas and on that individuals linked to the *Ujednjena omladina srpska*. In these relationships the Italian historiography (but also international historiography) found the precursor ideas of some state forms that have been experienced in the Western Balkans during the 19th and especially the 20th Century.

Notwithstanding that the research of the international balance has been the determining factor in the development of these solutions, Mazzini was not the only voice that raised from the Italian republican movement on the "fate" of the Southern Slavs. The apostle of the (Italian) fatherland seems to have been a prophet also for other countries.

It is interesting to investigate the thought of an Italian-Dalmatian, Nicolò Tommaseo, republican, liberal and catholic.

His "discovery" of Serbia took place in Sibenik, his hometown, through the association with the Serb-Dalmatian Spiro Popovic. For Tommaseo Serbia was like an “ethical category”: a young and pure country that could act as a counterbalance to the corrupt and decrepit Western civilization.

In that area that Tommaseo called “Illyrian context” the unifying element (as in the Mazzini thought) was the language and the literature. But, more than Mazzini did, he admitted the existence of strong regional national identities, each with its own historical and cultural peculiarities. The rapprochement between these regional homelands would therefore be very prudent. The Illyrian context, for Tommaseo, was not *supra,* overnational, but was a connection above the different homelands. In this *silloge* [anthology] Serbia represented the "strongest link." (Valle 2012, 70)

In the thought of Tommaseo, however, the linguistic aspect had a special value. The Dalmatian followed indeed a school of thought which recognize the language as the dominant feature in the definition of the nationalities – a very conventional conception in the 19th Century. At the same time, following a common trend in the Romantic age, he nurtured the multilingualism. Even more Tommaseo has cultivated the multilingualism not only as intellectual exercise, but also because of his own identity – that we can define not better than "Adriatic". In some of his own texts we can find the pride for his multilingualism: «Io, dall’origine e da’ casi posto in sul confine di genti diverse, appresi a non disprezzare nessuna, e così nessuna ammirare servamente. Nato tra Italia e Grecia, dimorato in diverse e non somiglianti né amiche regioni d’Italia; per qualch’ anno in terra francese ed in terra greca; amai le due lingue d’Italia e i suoi varii dialetti; la francese, la greca, la serbica, amai d’amore non dotto ma docile, e riverente al senno divino il qual si nasconde più mirabile nelle lingue de’ popoli semplici che nelle favelle de’ culti. E, bene o male, le scrissi, pur per prova d’affetto fraterno alle quattro nazioni, e per consolare nelle diverse loro glorie il pensiero» [«Myself, born on the borders between different peoples, I learned to not despise and not admire as a servant any of them. Born between Italy and Greece, I lived in different regions of Italy, that are not similar even friend each other; for some years I have lived in France and Greece; I loved both languages of Italy and its various dialects; the French, the Grecian, the Serbian languages I have loved with sweet love, not erudite; I was grateful to the divine sense that is hidden in the poor people’s languages more than in the letters of the cultured idividuals. And, well or badly, I wrote those languages, as proof of love to the four nations and to affirm my thinking in their different glories]» (Tommaseo 1852, XII).

The school of thought that individuates in the language the basics of nationality takes a figure as Tommaseo – himself supporter of this theory – to be object of controversial claims. Tommaseo, in 1844 published his famous anthology of lyrics, the *Iskrice*, in Serbian-Croatian language. The book was indeed a re-edition of an Italian anthology published in 1841 under the title *Scintille.* The Serbian-Croatian edition pushed, in late 19th Century, many intellectuals as Milan Đ. Milićević (1831-1908), Stajan Novacović (1842–1915), Ivan Milčetić (1853–1921) and others to consider the writer as a Serbian author or, in the same way, to affirm the Tommaseo's affinity to the Croatian nation. (Stipčević 2000, 254–255, 259). According to Serbian and Croatian interpretations Tommaseo abandoned his spiritual homeland to join what in the 1840-60s was a more stimulating cultural milieu, Italy. (Roksandić 2000, p. 630). Subject of interest in this paper are not the different appropriations of the figure of Nicolò Tommaseo. Instead what is to underline is that in the thought of the Dalmatian the concept of nationality – linked to the language – and the romantic trend to multilingualism coexisted. By connecting those data with the knowledge that Tommaseo had of the regional differences is possible to ascribe to his thought a view for which nationality and multiculturalism are not in opposition.

The southern Slav problem was also particularly strong, a precise object of interest, by that part of the Italian patriots subjected to the Austro-Hungarian domination. We might find in this aspect, the imperial subjection, the reason for a common thought.

The patriot Emilio Bandiera, minor brother of Attilio, both leaders of a secret society called *Esperia* and of a failed riot in south Italy in 1844, affirmed the need of a reversal – a switch – of the order of the Congress of Vienna (1815) through the creation of an Illyrian or a Serbian nation (Bandiera 1844). By confronting those arguments with the Mazzini's considerations is clear that many thinkers and patriots as Emilio Bandiera have a more superficial awareness of the geopolitical situation of Europe. Emilio wrote to Mazzini, probably from Malta or Kerkyra on March 28th 1844. In his letter we note much more interest for the matter of the asset of Europe than in the letters of his brother Attilio, in contact with Mazzini since two years at least, and more focused in Italian issues. Emilio instead shows to understand that a general European movement was necessary and functional, useful, for the single national aims. So he dares some predictions of the future arrangement of Europe. «Noi consideriamo l'Europa come riordinata in grandi masse popolari, che avranno inghiottito molte delle odierne così spesso irragionevoli suddivisioni politiche. Così noi antiveggiamo il popolo spagnuolo ed il portoghese fusi in una sola nazione; la Francia appoggiante del tutto i suoi confini orientali al Reno, e quindi assorbente il Belgio; la Germania costituita in una sola nazione, e ingrandita coll' Olanda e colla Danimarca continentale; la Svezia aumentata essa pure delle vicine isole danesi e della Finlandia; la Polonia risorta e forte come ai tempi del generoso Sobieski; la Russia possibilmente divisa in due; la Valacchia, la Servia, la Bulgaria, la Croazia, l'Erzegovinia, il Montenegro e la Dalmazia riunite in una nazionalità illirica o serba; l'Ungheria colle presenti sue dipendenze, più la Moldavia e la Bessarabia; la Grecia aumentata della Tessaglia, della

Macedonia, dell'Epiro, dell' Albania, della Romelia, di Candia, e più tardi dell' isole Ionie. [We consider Europe as reordered in great popular masses, which will include many of present and often unreasonable political subdivisions. So we preview the Spanish people and the Portuguese people merged in one nation; the eastern border of France totally following the Rhine river; Germany established in one nation, and enlarged with Netherlands and continental Denmark; Sweden augmented with Danish islands and with whole Finland; Poland reborn and strong as at the time of the generous Sobieski; Russia probably divided in two parts; Wallachia, Serbia, Bulgaria and Croatia, Herzegovina, Montenegro and Dalmatia united in an Illyrian or in a Serbian nation; Hungary with its actual territory enlarged with Moldavia and Bessarabia; Greece augmented with Tessaglia, Macedonia, Epirus, Albania, Romelia, Crete and later, maybe, of the Ionian islands]» (Bandiera 1844).

Emilio, focusing on Southern and Central-eastern Europe, argued that Poland, Hungary, Greece, Serbia and Italy had common interests against Russia, Austria and Turkey. He considered useful a not well-defined alliance between Nations to face the great military and political power of the three Empires. He pushed himself to openly speak of a “confederation” (but, we argue, once again he intended an “alliance”) a confederation between those nationalities that, he asserted, were already “done” in the ideologists mind. So the Greek example, at that time the most advanced and destined to success, should had work as incitement for every nationalities’ hopes. «Conviene dunque insinuarle di non arrestarsi sulla via gloriosa e profittevole che le si apre dinanzi, ma fidare nelle proprie forze, nelle simpatie che la circondano, nella giustizia della sua causa, e non soddisfatta delle ristrette concessioni d'un governo imperfettamente rappresentativo […] Allora comincierà l'ormai resa inevitabile guerra dei popoli contro i re; e per essa la vecchia Europa sarà interamente rifusa. [It is convenient to push the nationalities on the glorious and favorable road that is opened in front of them. They must trust in their own forces, in the moral support of other nations, in the rightness of their issues and they do not have to content themselves of concessions by the governments […] So the unavoidable war of the peoples against the kings will come; and through this war Europe will completely refunded]» (Ricciardi 1863, 78-80).

The political aim of the Italian intellectuals we quickly reviewed in those pages is not only the fight for the Nation, or better for the different Nations, but also for the Republic. In substantiating this argument comes a rapid analysis of the ideas of Cesare Balbo, Camillo di Cavour, and Bettino Ricasoli, who were not republicans.

Cesare Balbo (1789–1853) was a *neoguelfista* (he supported the creation of a federation of different Italian states under the leadership of the Pope). In his book *Le speranze d’Italia* [Hopes of Italy] (Balbo, 1844) he argued that the best solution of the Eastern matter was represented by the "inorientamento dell’Austria" (the projection to the East of Austrian Empire) finding in Austria a bulwark of Christianity called to fight the Ottoman Empire and to project itself exclusively to the East by abandoning its Italian dominions and avoiding at the same time the possibility that Russia had access to the Mediterranean (Balbo 1844, 147–151).

Camillo di Cavour (1810–1861), liberal, political leader of the Risorgimento, who guided the Piedmont government in the most important steps of the Italian national building process, was a big fan of Balbo. Cavour, during the Paris Congress of 1856, proposed the exchange between some Italian territories (Duchy of Parma and Duchy of Modena) and the Bosnia[1]. After the Crimean war, Italy had a place in the international community and found in this congress the chance to present and promote the Italian national issues. Cavour was in the 1850s the "rising" personality of the *Risorgimento*. Mazzini himself understood the appeal employed on Italian people by the pair "Savoia crown – Cavour". But if Mazzini considered that the possible resolution of the European national matters (so the destruction of the balance of the Vienna Congress) was represented by the mobilization of the oppressed people of the continent, supported by some "enlightened" western States, Cavour only searched the solidarity of those western countries. And he did it just for a practical reason: to fill the military gap between Italy and its enemies – a gap that, during the Italian first independence war (1848–49) appeared uncontestable (Balzani 2008, 347–348). In both different positions, anyhow, the resolution of the Italian problems seemed related, linked, with the national claims of Serbia and the Balkan area in general even if Cavour considered the Balkan area as a kind of set of territories to exchange.

Also Bettino Ricasoli (1809–1880), liberal himself, who has been president of the Italian Council in 1861–62, after the death of Cavour, proposed the exchange between Veneto and Bosnia (Malatesta 1941; Valle 2012, 74).

Previously the Piedmont diplomacy had walked his own path with the mission of the consul Marcello Cerruti in Serbia in 1849 (Clemente, Prijevec 1980, 39 – 40). The contact with the Piedmont diplomat divided the Serbian national movement that from that moment found out a new interlocutor. Not only the Republican Party and the relationship with the international republicanism could be a way to perpetrate the national mission. The monarchist Piedmont itself could be a possible, and more reliable, interlocutor.

In examining Slavic national issues Mazzini seemed to grasp the nucleus of a problem that is still European, and that it is even more evident nowadays. This problem is namely the lack (and at the same time the need) of a European structure that could and should be institutional, but also cultural. Europe would have to be the common house of nationalities and nationalities would have to "build the house". The Slavic context was the perfect example because it was subjected and influenced by the Russian empire. The influence of Russia in European political dynamics was clear to Mazzini. He argued that: «Propriamente parlando [il nazionalismo russo] non è colà nazionale: non sorse dalle viscere del popolo; si intensifica nel capo dello Stato e non tende se non ad assorbire gli altri centri, offrendo ad essi il miraggio d'una forza già costituita e organizzata, senza nulla che possa dar soddisfazione

[1] Letter to count Walewski, Foreign affairs Minister of France, 21st January 1856 and *Memorandum* to general La Marmora, commander of the Italian corps in Crimea, 21st January 1856 (Cavour 1883, 167-174 and 175-177; Di Nolfo 1965, 1062).

alle aspirazioni intellettuali, morali, sociali della razza. [Properly speaking (the Russian nationalism) is not "national". It do not arose from the bowels of the people; it intensifies itself in the figure of the head of the state and is tended only to absorb the other centers, providing them the mirage of an already constituted and organized force, without anything that can satisfy the intellectual, moral, social, racial aspiration of the people.]» (Mazzini 1848). For this reason Mazzini, in his argument, hoped that a national rising, were lit in Poland, awaking so other Slavic peoples from their deep sleep. This could take to build and declare the existence of the different European nationalities but also could take to the secondary, but important however, goal of the constitution of a Europe of Nations. Europe, in fact, at that time was suffering the internal pressure of the inner European Empires, as the Austrian, and the foreign influence of the Eurasian Empires as the Ottoman and the Tsarist.

In the ideas of all these Italian thinkers, as in most of the republican thinkers in Europe, there is a view that today seems to be under a fierce attack. In the Balkans as well in the rest of the continent. This political horizon might be useful and functional to the resolution of the current crisis of the nation-states and also could be a boost to reconsider the concepts of unity, solidarity and integration in Europe. It is important to emphasize that the Nation and the transnational brotherhood are related mostly when referring to the Republican universe, that, for its deep ideological motivations, is a nationalist movement (Viroli 1999). An international horizon – that for its nature is included in the concept of "class fight" of the Socialist ideology – is not considered. The utopia of the European republicanism seems instead to aim at a *trans*national goal, a kind of alliance between oppressed nationalities against the imperial superstructures.

We note that in the Republican thought the Nation building process and the Nation in itself correspond to the search of social achievements, mostly for what concerns the political rights of the citizens. Those achievements are not in conflict with the claims of other Nations. Even if in the Balkans, the first National rebellion (the *Prvi srpski ustanak*) had a strong agrarian characterization, in the middle of the 19th century the most propulsive individuals of the South Slavic resurgence movement had an inter-class and a trans-national perspective.

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Пиеро Пасини

Изградња нације и међународна солидарност

Разматрања о Балкану у италијанским републиканским размишљањима у 19. веку

Кључне речи:

изградња нације, републиканизам, идеологије, Европа, политика

Овај рад представља размишљања неких италијанских републиканских идеолога и патриота која се односе на национални поредак Јужних Словена, са нарочитим акцентом на Западни Балкан. Републиканци су имали одређену концепцију националних питања, различиту од концепта нације и националности које срећемо код социјалиста, либерала и монархиста. Такође, постојала је нарочита осетљивост италијанских патриота под аустријском круном, која се тицала националности на Балкану.

У раду ће се разматрати идеје Ђузепе Мазинија, увелико проучаване од стране италијанских, словенских и интернационалних историографа, али такође и идеје Томасеа, Италијана из Далмације, републиканца али различитог положаја од Мазинија, затим идеје Атилија и Емилија Бандиера, венецијанских патриота блиских Мазинијевим ставовима али независним што се тиче политичке праксе. Такође, рад ће представити неке елементе визије међународног поретка либерала и монархиста који нису били под утицајем Аустрије. Проучавање ових тема је сврсисходно и актуелно у овом периоду кризе која се односи на концепт држава-нација, и чини се корисним да се поново размотре концепти као што су заједништво, интеграција и солидарност Европе и нација.